

Comprehensive Plan Policies Related to Tree Retention

COMMUNITY DESIGN ELEMENT

Purpose Statement: The purpose of the Community Design Element is to establish policies that set standards for high quality development, improve the aesthetics and functionality of existing neighborhoods and commercial areas, and guide the development of new neighborhoods that are part of a better community.

Recognizing that the exceptional quality of life in Renton is dependent upon a strong local economy, these policies are intended to further that economic health. They are based on the belief that a positive image and high quality development attracts more of the same.

Goals:

1. To raise the aesthetic quality of the City,
2. To strengthen the economy through high quality development, and
3. To ensure that a high quality of life is maintained as Renton evolves.

Discussion:

The objectives and policies adopted to meet these goals address issues related to both the natural and built environment such as: how the physical organization of development can create a desirable place to live; the importance of view protection; ways to improve the streetscape; principles of vegetation preservation, selection, and maintenance; principles of architectural and urban design; and the function of urban separators.

I. Natural Areas

Summary: Natural areas are an important component of the community. The purpose of including natural areas in the Community Design Element is not so that natural areas will be “designed,” but rather so that the built environment can be shaped in a manner that takes into consideration the natural environment.

The Community Design Natural Areas objectives are intended to address:

- Urban growth in relation to natural areas,
- Protection and enhancement of natural areas, and
- Public access to natural areas.

Objective CD-A: The City's unique natural features, including land form, vegetation, lakeshore, river, creeks and streams, and wetlands should be protected and enhanced as opportunities arise.

Policy CD-1: Integrate development into natural areas by clustering development and/or adjusting site plans to preserve wetlands, steep slopes, and notable stands of trees or other vegetation. Natural features should function as site amenities. Use incentives such as flexible lot size and configuration to encourage preservation and add amenity value.

Policy CD-2: During development, effort should be made to preserve watercourses as open channels.

Policy CD-3: Site design should maximize public access to and create opportunities for use of shoreline areas in locations contiguous to a lake, river, stream, or wetland where such access would not jeopardize habitats and other environmental attributes of the water body.

Policy CD-4: Development review of proposed projects should identify opportunities for increasing public access to Lake Washington, the Cedar River, wetlands, streams, and creeks in the City.

Policy CD-5: Renton's public and private open space should be increased in size through acquisition of additional land or dedication of Native Growth Protection Area easements.

Policy CD-6: Public open space acquisition should be consistent with the Long Range Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Plan Policy.

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IV. Development in Commercial Districts and New Residential Subdivisions

Summary: Objectives and policies that address commercial infill and residential subdivision development are intended to serve multiple purposes. First, concerns about new development "fitting in" to established areas of Renton have resulted in an increased awareness that site design and architecture, when planned to be compatible with the context of the neighborhood or commercial area, can make the "fit" of the new project more comfortable.

Second, these objectives and policies provide assistance to project proponents so when planning new development for Renton, they can be guided in their choices.

Third, city officials, who must make decisions regarding new projects, can use these objectives and policies to guide their review of project proposals.

Elements of new development represented by objectives and policies in this section include:

- A. Site planning
- B. Gateways
- C. Views and focal points
- D. Architecture
- E. Landscaping
- F. Streets, sidewalks, and streetscape
- G. Signs
- H. Lighting
- I. Urban Center

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C. Views and Focal Points

Summary: Views are a resource that should be preserved for public access to the greatest extent possible. Focal points should be created and used to enhance the community.

Objective CD-F: Protect and enhance public views of distinctive features from public streets and other focal points within the City and the surrounding area. Implementing code for Objective CD-F and Policies CD-36, CD-37, CD-38, CD-39 will be put in place within a five (5) year period from the date of adoption of the GMA update.

Policy CD-36: Scenic views and view corridors along roadways in the City should be identified and preserved through application of development standards.

Policy CD-37: Access from public roadways to views of features of distinction should be enhanced through the development of public viewpoints where appropriate.

Policy CD-38: Neighborhood identity should be established by featuring views, highlighting landmarks, or creating focal points of distinction.

Policy CD-39: Focal points should have a combination of public areas, such as parks or plazas; architectural features, such as towers, outstanding building design, transit stops, or outdoor eating areas; and landscaped areas. These features should be connected to pedestrian pathways.

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E. Landscaping

Summary: Landscaping is a key element of the City. It can be used to create distinctive character for developments, neighborhoods and along city streets; to frame views; to block unsightly views; or mitigate the scale of large buildings. It can also be used to reduce traffic noise levels and the effects of pollution.

Objective CD-J: The City of Renton should adopt a citywide landscape plan that furthers the aesthetic goal of the City and provides guidance for future development and infrastructure improvements. Implementing code for Objective CD-J and Policies CD-45, CD-46 and CD-48 will be put in place within a five (5) year period from the date of adoption of the GMA update.

Policy CD-45: Existing mature vegetation and distinctive trees should be retained and protected in developments.

Policy CD-46: A comprehensive landscape architectural plan for the City should be developed. The plan should include recommendations for preferred street and landscape trees.

Policy CD-47: Landscape plans should take into consideration the potential impact of mature vegetation on significant views so that future removal of view-blocking trees will not be necessary.

Policy CD-48: A comprehensive landscape plan for the City should include areas such as those adjacent to freeways and major highways and other public rights-of-way. The installation of this landscaping should be encouraged.

Policy CD-49: Citywide development standards, for landscape design, installation, and maintenance should be developed.

Policy CD-50: Trees should be planted along residential streets, in parking lots requiring landscaping, and in other pervious areas as the opportunity arises. Trees should be retained whenever possible and maintained using Best Management Practices as appropriate for each type.

Policy CD-51: Landscaping is encouraged, and may be required, in parking areas to improve their appearance and to increase drainage control.

Policy CD-52: Landscape and surface water drainage plans should be coordinated to maximize percolation of surface water and minimize runoff from the site.

Objective CD-K: Site plans for new development projects for all uses, including residential subdivisions, should include landscape plans.

Policy CD-53: Landscape plans for proposed development projects should include public entryways, street rights-of-way, stormwater detention ponds, and all common areas.

Policy CD-54: Residential subdivisions and multi-family residential projects should include planting of street trees according to an adopted citywide landscape plan.

Policy CD-55: Maintenance programs should be required for landscaped areas in development projects, including entryways, street rights-of-way, stormwater retention/detention ponds, and common areas.

Policy CD-56: Surface water retention/detention ponds should be landscaped appropriately for the location of the facility.

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ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENT

GOAL

Continue protection of Renton's natural systems, natural beauty, and environmental quality.

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Summary: The purpose of the environmental policies is to provide the policy background and basis for future environmental actions by the City of Renton as it attempts to balance urbanization, economic development, and natural area protection. Environmental policies address substantive issues such as development within floodplains, wetlands, and steep slopes and procedural issues such as how these areas should be mapped and how they should be regulated. Environmental policies will be implemented through economic development decisions, critical areas regulations, and incentives for environmental protection. *(See the Employment Area - Industrial and Open Space Sections of the Land Use Element, Stormwater Section of the Capital Facilities Plan Element, Stormwater & Aquifer Protection Sections of the Utilities Element for policies related to Environmental Element.)*

General Objective and Policies

Objective EN-A: Protect, restore and enhance environmental quality through land use plans and patterns, surface water management programs, park master programs, development reviews, incentive programs and work with citizens, land owners, and public and private agencies.

Policy EN-1. Prevent development on lands where development would create hazards to life, property, or environmental quality.

Discussion: *Development clustering, preservation of significant natural features, and retention of or establishment of vegetated corridors are examples of development patterns that implement these objectives.*

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Stormwater

Objective EN-F: Conduct a stormwater management program which optimizes Renton's water resources.

Policy EN-24. Maintain and enhance natural drainage systems to protect water quality, reduce public costs, and prevent environmental degradation.

Policy EN-25. Preserve natural surface water storage sites that help regulate service flows and recharge groundwater.

Policy EN-26. Provide local funding for the stormwater program through Storm Water Utility.

Policy EN-27. Control quantity and quality of stormwater run-off from all new development to be consistent with or improved over existing conditions.

Policy EN-28. Minimize on-site erosion and sedimentation during and after construction.

Policy EN-29. Route stormwater run-off from new development to avoid gully erosion or landslides in ravines and steep hillsides.

Policy EN-30. Industries and businesses should use best management practices to prevent erosion and sedimentation and to prevent pollutants from entering ground or surface waters.

Policy EN-31. Implement surface water management systems which protect natural features whenever feasible.

Policy EN-32. Promote means of flow control, when required in waterways, that maintain the channel in as natural a state as possible.

Policy EN-33. Use, maintain, and enhance the natural stormwater storage capacity provided in existing significant wetlands.

Policy EN-34. Use interlocal agreements and cooperative planning programs to coordinate, where appropriate, with King County, Tukwila, and Kent and other agencies for stormwater management.

Policy EN-35. Actively participate in non-point source pollution watershed plans including those for the May Creek, Cedar River, and Green River Basins.

Objective EN-G: Provide a storm and surface water control and drainage system capable of preventing threats to life, property and public safety during a 100 year flooding event.

Policy EN-36. Promote the return of precipitation to the soil at natural rates near where it falls through the use of detention ponds, grassy swales, and infiltration where feasible.

Policy EN-37. Promote development design which minimizes impermeable surface coverage by limiting site coverage and maximizing the exposure of natural surfaces.

Policy EN-38. Manage the cumulative effects of storm water through a combination of engineering and preservation of natural systems.

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